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ABSTRACT

Written for children ages ten through twelve, this book contains short stories and poems about play and safety by four boys and girls of ages seven to fourteen. Illustrations accompany the children's work. The book is intended to be read together by adult and child. Tips are provided for the children in assuring the safety of their younger siblings and friends. A connect-the-dots picture is included as well as space for the child's definition and drawing of what safety means to him/her. Finally, there is a section to assist adults in instructing children about safe use of playground equipment: swings, slides, climbing apparatus, and seesaws. (For safety books for ages three through five and ages six through nine see CE 020 051 and 020 052.) (CSS)

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BIG BIG KIDS

FOR AGES 10-12

ED166558

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

PREFACE

This book was written by children, for children.

Except for minor editorial changes, the stories and poems remain essentially as the children wrote them. Noelle, age 7; Judy, age 9; Dale, age 12; and Stirling, age 14, were the writers.

The book includes a special "Adult's Corner" at the back.

Learning and personal growth often take place when opportunity is provided for peer identification of problems and problem solutions. The presentation of children's own personal experiences, feelings, and concerns often has a better chance of influencing other children's behavior than adult rules and regulations.

This book is an outgrowth of that concept.

Four children were given materials from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The materials presented the potential hazards of playground equipment and the kinds of injuries children have received. The children were asked to read the materials, and they discussed them with each other and an adult. The mission of the Consumer Product Safety Commission was discussed with the children. Their concept of play and their experiences on the playground were also discussed.

With vivid imagination, they created the characters of Say-hey, a talking frog, some of Say-hey's animal friends, as well as other characters. The artist read their stories and based his drawings on the descriptions of the characters as the children imagined them.

These stories and poems express the children's desire to take risks and have fun, to identify their risk-taking behavior, and then reluctantly to consider the desired change in behavior. They clearly demonstrate that children, when given adequate information and the opportunity to consider their own playground experiences with each other, can learn about playground equipment dangers and ways of correcting their unsafe play habits.

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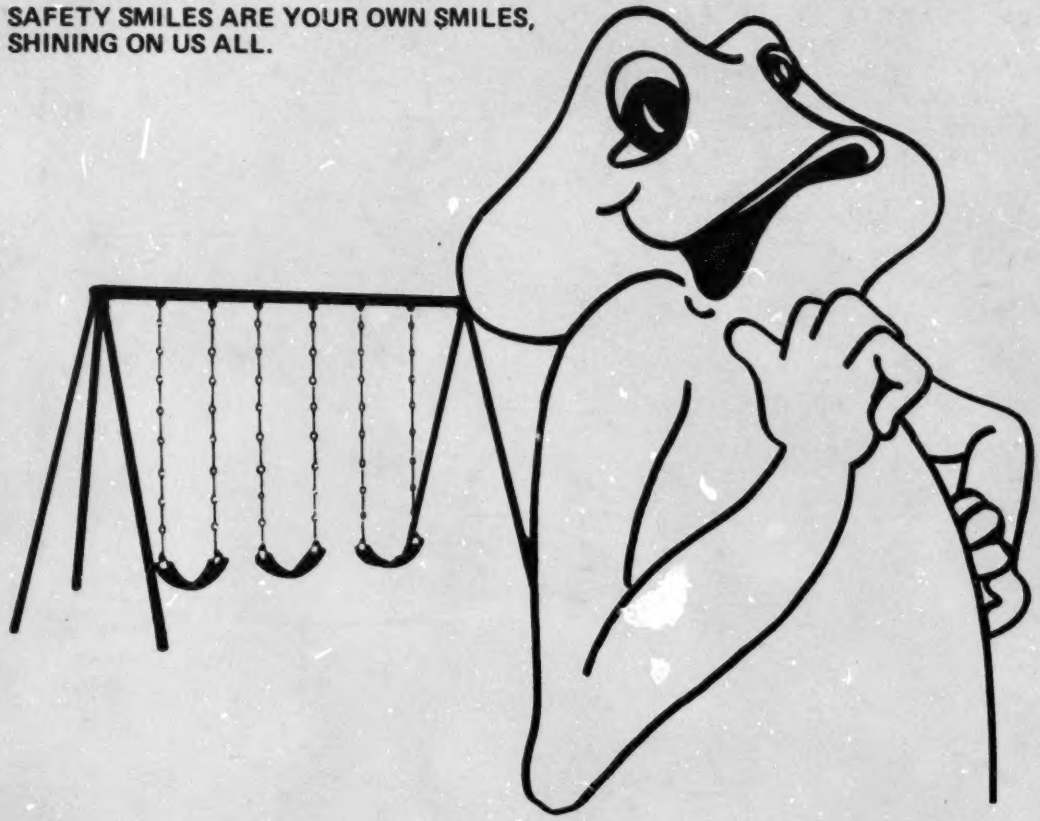
SAY-HEY

I AM SAY-HEY.
I CELEBRATE THE JOY OF PLAY.
I HAVE BEEN MANY PLACES,
SEEN MANY THINGS,
SEEN NATIONS OF CHILDREN
GROW AND PLAY JOYFULLY AND
PASS ON TO OTHER PLAY,
OTHER FUN, OTHER JOYS.
BUT HERE, WHILE YOU STOP OFF
WITH ME ON THE JOYFUL PLAYGROUND,
WE'LL LEARN SAFETY SMILES
THAT WILL KEEP US HAPPY AND HEALTHY AS
WE GROW AND ENJOY.

SAFETY SMILES ARE YOUR OWN SMILES,
SHINING ON US ALL.



PLAY: THE MACHINES

JUNGLE GYMS, MONKEY BARS,
SLIDE, SWINGS, AND TOTTERS.
I LOVE THEM ALL, THOUGH IF I
HAD TO CHOOSE ONE, RATHER,
JUST ONE MOST PRECIOUS PLAY MACHINE,
I'D TAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT,
FINEST, GRANDEST OF THEM ALL,
MY RIP ROARING, DYNAMO PLAY
MACHINE: ME.

SAFETY, WHAT IS IT?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT SAFETY IS?
NO ONE OWNS IT.
YOU CAN'T SEE IT, SMELL IT,
OR STEP ON IT.
BUT IF IT IS MISSING,
YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT IS BY
FINDING OUT WHAT PLAYING
IS LIKE WITHOUT IT.

THE KEY

YOU ARE THE CHILD,
HAPPY AND WILD AND WISE.
IN YOU IS THE KEY
THAT WILL BRING US SAFETY.

THE KING OF PLAYGROUND SAFETY LAND

ONCE THERE WAS A KING WHO LIVED IN PLAYGROUND SAFETY LAND. ALL THE CHILDREN PLAYED SAFELY ON THE PLAYGROUND. THEN SOME KIDS FROM OUTER SPACE CAME AND STARTED DOING TRICKS ON THE PLAYGROUND. THEN EVERYBODY ELSE STARTED DOING TRICKS ON THE PLAYGROUND...."NOT PLAYING SAFE" AND GETTING HURT.

THE KING THEN HAD A PROBLEM. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO AT FIRST. HE WENT TO ALL THE PARENTS IN PLAYGROUND SAFETY LAND. HE ASKED ALL THE PARENTS TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN OFF THE SWINGS AND OTHER PLAY EQUIPMENT ON THE PLAYGROUND.

BUT THE CHILDREN CRIED AND CRIED,(AND WOULD NOT DO ANYTHING). THE KING SAID, "OKAY, YOU CAN PLAY ON THE PLAY EQUIPMENT, BUT DO NOT DO ANY TRICKS." BUT THE OUTER SPACE CHILDREN STILL DID TRICKS.

ALMOST ALL THE CHILDREN IN PLAYGROUND SAFETY LAND CONTINUED TO GET HURT. THEN THE KING SAID TO THE OUTER SPACE CHILDREN, "YOU WILL HAVE TO GO BACK TO OUTER SPACE."

BUT THE OUTER SPACE CHILDREN DID NOT LISTEN, THEY JUST KEPT PLAYING UNSAFELY. SO, THE KING WENT DOWN TO THE PLAYGROUND. HE PLAYED WITH THE CHILDREN, BUT HE PLAYED SAFELY.

SO THE CHILDREN STARTED WATCHING THE KING AND THEY SOON STARTED TO PLAY SAFELY TOO.

HE CLIMBED UP THE SLIDE CAREFULLY WHEN HIS TURN CAME AND SLID DOWN SITTING DOWN WITH HIS FEET FORWARD. WHEN SWINGING, HE WAITED FOR HIS SWING TO STOP BEFORE GETTING OFF. AND WHEN HE CLIMBED ON THE MONKEY BARS HE DID NOT SWING BY HIS KNEES.

THE OUTER SPACE CHILDREN SAW THAT THE OTHER CHILDREN WERE HAVING MUCH MORE FUN AND FINALLY JOINED THEM IN PLAYING SAFELY.

THE STORY OF LITTLE BOBBY SLATER

LITTLE BOBBY SLATER LOVED TO PLAY ON THE SLIDES AT HIS SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. HE LOVED TO PLAY ON THE SWINGS ALL THE DAY LONG. THE PLAYGROUND WAS HIS HOME AWAY FROM HOME... BUT, IT WAS THERE WHERE HIS SERIOUS ACCIDENT TOOK PLACE.

BOBBY WAS AT THE PLAYGROUND ONE EARLY TUESDAY MORNING.

HE AND HIS FRIEND JIMMY WERE TAKING TURNS GOING DOWN THE SLIDE.

BOBBY SAW SOMETHING UNDER THE SLIDE. HE WENT UNDER THE SLIDE TO PICK IT UP. WHILE HE WAS UNDER THE SLIDE, IT FELL OVER ON TOP OF HIM.

BOBBY WAS RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. THE DOCTORS DISCOVERED THAT BOBBY HAD SUFFERED A BROKEN LEG AND A BROKEN ARM.

WHEN THE PRINCIPAL AND POLICE CAME TO SEE WHAT HAPPENED, THEY NOTICED THAT THE SLIDE WAS NOT SECURED INTO THE GROUND PROPERLY.

YOU CAN HELP

You may be wondering why you need to know about playgrounds. After all, you're big enough to take care of yourself.

But you may have younger brothers or sisters for whom you are responsible when they play on playground equipment; and, when you do use the equipment, smaller children may watch you and follow your example.

You need to be aware of what is safe and what is unsafe as you play on the playground. After all, you don't want to get hurt, and you don't want younger friends who look up to you and who follow your example to get hurt either.

You may at times drop over to the playground. When you are there, the little children watch you and may try to do what you do.

Sometimes you might do something that is too dangerous for the little ones to try. If a child does try to imitate you, an accident may occur that you could have helped to prevent.

There are an alarming number of playground accidents at home, at school, and in the community, and this number is continually increasing.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has estimated that more than 100,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with playground equipment. A few children were even killed.

Here are a few examples of some of the things that have happened while playing unsafely:

—A 9-year-old girl's skull was fractured when she ran under a swing.

—A 4-year-old boy suffered permanent brain damage when a portable slide fell over on him.

—A 10-year-old boy suffered cuts on his forehead when a swing was pushed in his face.

—A 13-year-old boy suffered a cut on his foot when he swung into a fence.

These are just a few of the numerous accidents that have occured on playground equipment.

There is nothing silly about playing safely and carefully. Remember, playground safety is everybody's business.

By your giving the right example not only to children smaller than you, but also to older and larger children, playgrounds and other places can become safer places.

Listed below are a few things that you and your family can do to prevent accidents:

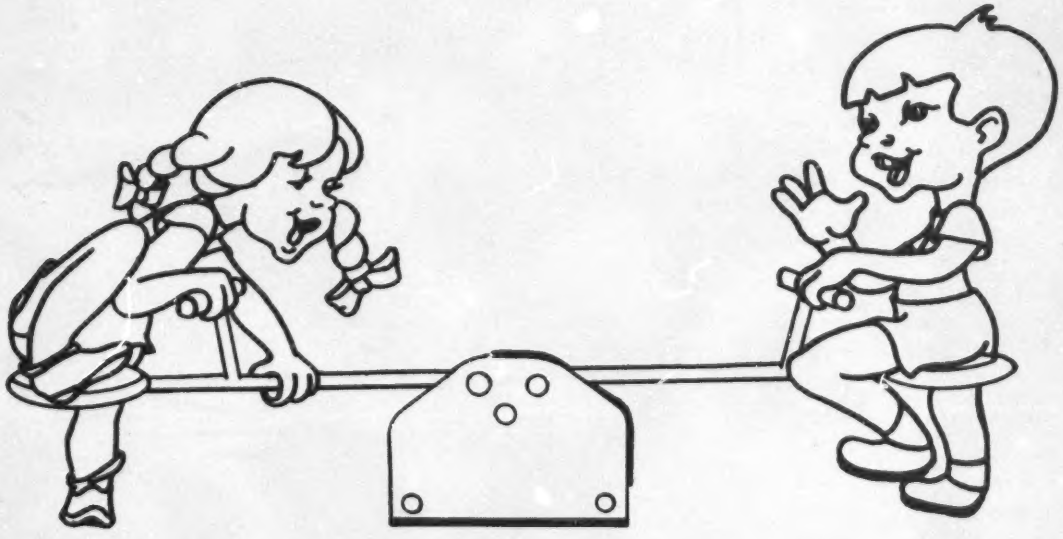
A. Practice safe play habits around playground equipment:
   1. No roughhousing around playground equipment; no shoving, pushing or fighting.
   2. Sit in the center of a swing.
   3. Don't twist the swing chains, and never swing empty seats or walk in front of moving swings.
   4. Never walk up the slide from the front.
   5. Do not slide down the sliding board on your stomach or back, but always sit straight up with your feet out in front.

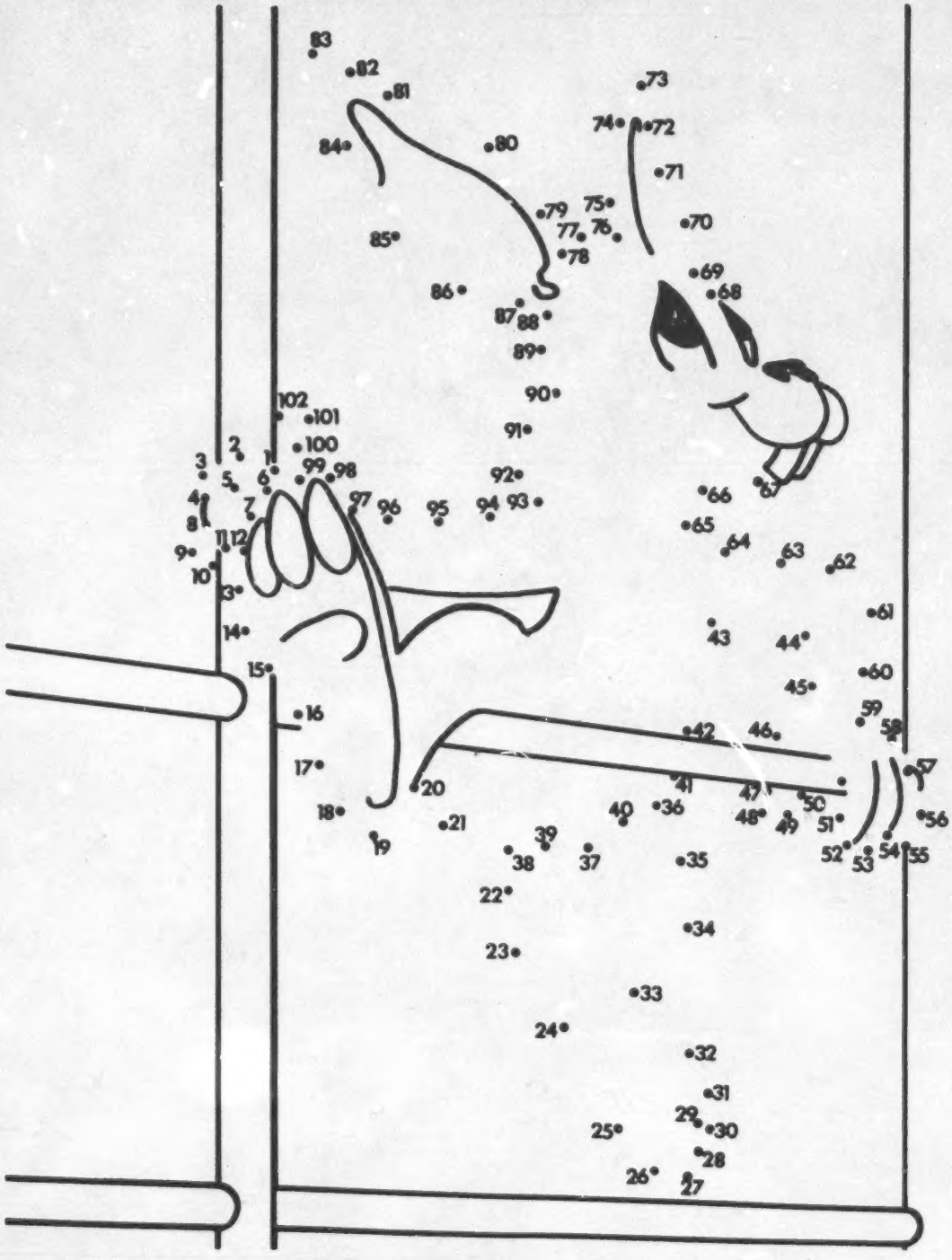
B. Young children should always be supervised when using playground equipment.

C. If your parents are shopping for playground equipment, there are certain things to look for that may save a child from injury:
   1. If the equipment is not fully assembled, be sure that there are detailed assembly instructions. They should be simple enough to follow correctly.
   2. Stability is very important. The equipment should come with anchoring devices to hold it firmly to the ground.
   3. Any exposed screws or bolts should be capped.
   4. Do not buy equipment with open-ended hooks, particularly "S" hooks; moving parts (sometimes found on gliders) that could pinch or crush fingers; sharp edges or rough surfaces; or rings with a diameter of more than 5 inches but less than 10 inches, since they may entrap children's heads.

D. Children should also be made aware of the need for safe equipment:
   1. If any equipment is shaky and not completely stable, do not play on it.
   2. If you see screws and bolts that are not covered, put tape over them.

E. Installing and maintaining equipment properly is important in accident prevention:
   1. Never install playground equipment over hard surfaces such as concrete.
   2. Place playground sets at least six feet from obstructions such as fences or walls.
   3. Check twice a month to be sure that all nuts, bolts, and clamps are tight.
   4. Replace nuts and bolts that have rusted. Swing chains and swings should be checked for rust and replaced if necessary. All rusted areas on metal tubing should be sanded and repainted.

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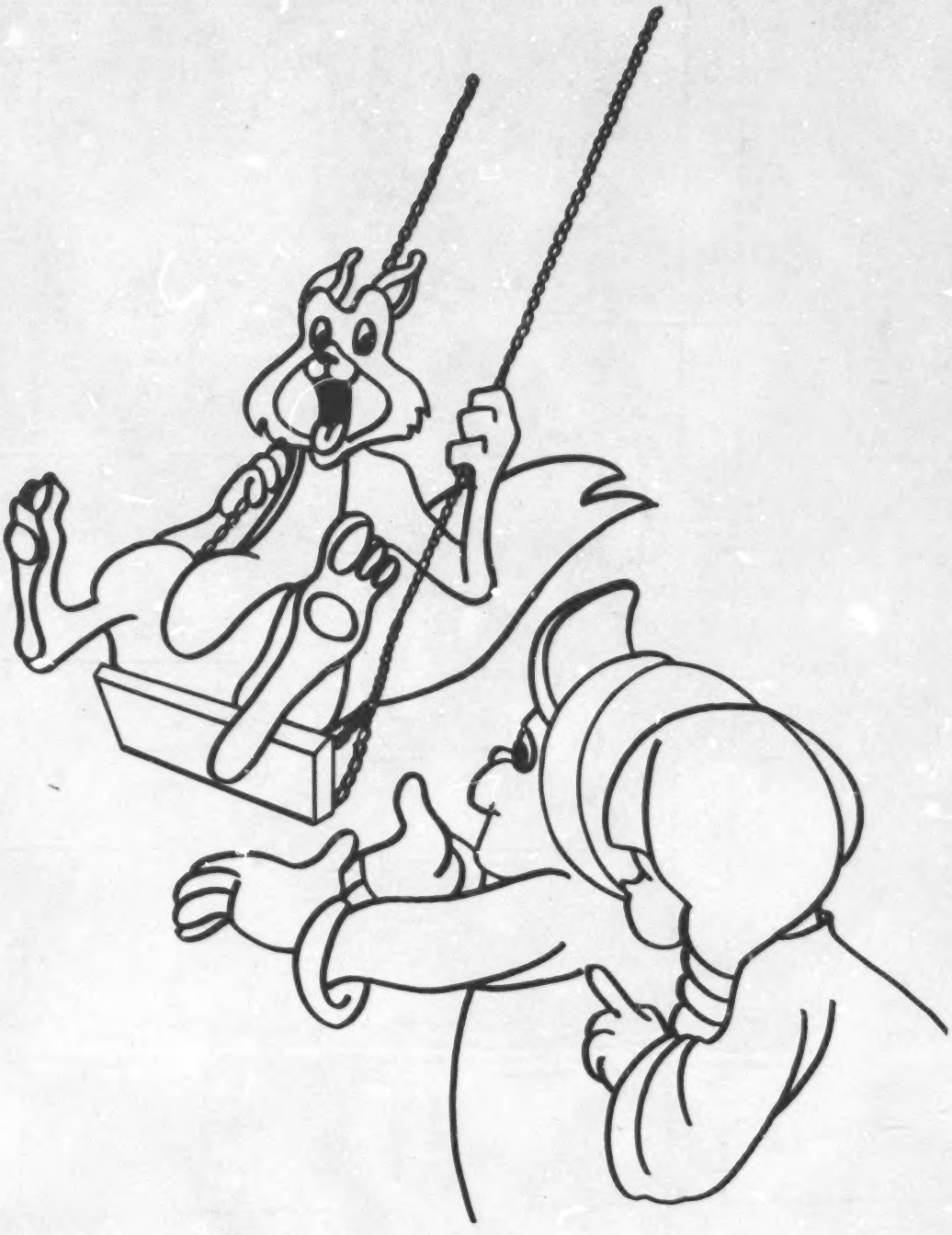

WRITE WHAT YOU THINK SAFETY IS.

DRAW WHAT YOU THINK SAFETY IS.

ADULT'S CORNER

Happy playful children who are very eager to release themselves on the playground often forget what they have been told or never really knew about ways of having fun safely on the playground. These materials are designed to assist children in learning safe play habits on the playground and to continue to reinforce that learning.

To a child, a playground is anywhere—at school, down the block, at a friend's house, or in the backyard. Since adults cannot always be around to assist children to learn playground safety behavior, the importance of selecting the right equipment cannot be overemphasized. It must be installed and maintained correctly and consistently and, more importantly, children must be taught and reminded how to use playground equipment safely.

Play is in the nature of children. It is not merely an "extra" or inconsequential part of a child's life. It is through play that children imitate adults and learn adult habits; through play they learn to be social beings—they learn how to interact with others, to take turns, to share, and to cooperate. Through play, children first learn about life by imagining, creating, and designing their own life situations. They learn to think through play; to live out their dreams. They develop muscles and muscle coordination; they learn how healthy physical play is for them—how it helps them to grow and strengthen their bodies.

Play, therefore, is important to children and to all parents and adults. If children are to grow and learn, they must do so safely. Toys and games, bicycles, sports equipment, swimming pools and playground equipment must be designed with safety in mind.

It is natural that children will roughhouse on the playground. This type of behavior, however, is what usually leads to accidents. It is necessary, therefore, to change the child's behavior. In trying to motivate children toward playing safely, the positive approach is preferred. Children should not be frightened into changing their behavior on the playground. The idea of "Play Happy, Play Safely" should be emphasized—i.e., "Sit in the swing" instead of "Don't stand in the swing," or "Hold on with both hands" rather than, "Don't fool around on the monkey bars."

Older children should be taught that it is important for them to play safely because younger brothers and sisters will imitate them. They should be encouraged to take the responsibility of helping younger children play safely on the playground and on equipment that is appropriate for their age group.

You can play an instrumental role in helping children learn to "Play Happy, Play Safely."

You can teach children how to use each type of playground equipment by pointing out the following safe play habits to them:

SWINGS

Tell children to:

—Sit in the center of the swing; never stand or kneel.
—Hold on with both hands.
—Stop the swing before getting off.
—Walk way around the swing—not too close to the front or the back.
—Never push anyone else in the swing or allow others to push them.
—Have one person in one swing at one time.
—Avoid swinging empty swings, and to never twist swing chains.
—Avoid putting head and feet through exercise rings on the swing sets.

SLIDES

Instruct children to:

- Hold on with both hands as they go up the steps of the slide, taking one step at a time; never go up the sliding surface or the frame.
- Keep at least one arm's length between children.
- Slide down feet first, always sitting up, one at a time.
- Be sure no one is in front of the slide before sliding down.
- Be patient, avoid pushing or shoving, and to wait their turn.
- Leave the bottom of the slide after they have taken their turn.
- Never use a metal slide that has been sitting in the sun.

CLIMBING APPARATUS

(geodesic domes or arches and jungle gyms)

Tell children to:

- Use the correct grip; use both hands.
- Be careful of climbing down, and to watch out for those climbing up.
- Avoid having too many people using the apparatus at one time.

(horizontal ladders and bars)

- Start at the same end of the apparatus and move in the same direction.
- Stay well behind the person in front and watch out for swinging feet.
- Never use apparatus when it is wet.
- Avoid speed contests or trying to cover too large a distance in one move.
- Drop from the bars with knees slightly bent and land on both feet.

SEESAWS

Instruct children to:

- Sit facing each other, not leaning back.
- Keep a firm hold with both hands.
- Never stand or run on the board.
- Keep feet out from underneath the board as it descends.

SUMMARY

Children should be encouraged to care about themselves and the health and happiness of playmates on the playground.

They should be told how important it is for them to exercise, to take care of their bodies, to grow strong and healthy (like Mom or Dad or some sports or cartoon hero).

It is important that adults take the time to learn about playground safety for the sake of the children—to be properly motivated to protect all children from unnecessary hurt and risks in their play.

Help the children you come in contact with play happy, and play safely.